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## \$3 million from stimulus to clean up diesel engines

### Program targets engine exhaust

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The Minnesota Environmental Initiative has been awarded a \$3 million federal stimulus grant to clean up diesel engines in the state.

The grant from the Environmental Protection Agency will allow the nonprofit environmental group's Project Green Fleet program to repower 700 publicly and privately operated diesel engines, enabling them to cut their air pollution and run more efficiently.

The Project Green Fleet program is a voluntary collaboration of businesses, government agencies and nonprofit groups that have worked to retrofit heavy-duty diesel vehicles and school buses with pollution-control equipment.

"It's a big deal for us," said Bill Droessler, MEI's director of environmental projects. "Putting it into context, of the money that was in this part of the stimulus funding, this is 2 percent of the entire program around the country. That's huge for a state entirely in attainment (of federal air-quality standards)."

Diesel vehicles such as buses and trucks make up 10 percent of traffic on state roads but contribute more than half of the traffic-generated air pollution, according to MEI.

Droessler said most of the projects paid for with the grant already are in the pipeline, but others will be sought out.

"This will allow us to have more partners and to go into new sectors," Droessler said.

Begun in 2005, the Project Green Fleet program has retrofitted almost 50 heavy-duty diesel vehicles and more than 1,200 school buses.

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